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# Food and Nutrition

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Reaching  
Baltimore's  
Elderly





# Meals on Wheels reach Baltimore's elderly

By Carol Brent McLaughlin

WHEN THE LITTLE grey-haired lady in a bright knit cap carries her wooden basket into the courtyard of Perkins Housing Project every Friday noon, she looks like everyone's image of the cookie-toting grandma. Bright-eyed and spry, Mrs. Elizabeth Garland actually is packing a sack of two nutritious meals to Mr. William Will, one of the nine elderly "Meals on Wheels" customers on her route in south Baltimore, Maryland.

With a shy smile and an open door, Mr. Will greets his friendly visiting volunteers from the Christ Lutheran Church kitchen—one of eleven Baltimore Metropolitan Meals on Wheels, Inc.'s meal preparation and training sites.

Friday is Mrs. Garland's day to bring a hot lunch and a cold dinner plus cheerful understanding to this elderly man who lives alone and who has difficulty cooking all of his own meals. A two-year old amendment to food stamp regulations enables Mr. Will to use food stamps to buy these home-delivered meals, which help him remain self-sufficient and at home in familiar surroundings.

The tremendous empathetic response of so many elderly volunteers to help their aging neighbors is one of the main reasons why Baltimore's independent, non-profit meal delivery service has been able to provide meals at low cost to the needy.

"You wouldn't believe the commitment and dedication of the volunteers in these kitchens!" exclaims Peggy Sheeler, director of the Balti-

more Metropolitan M.O.W. operation, which was first established in 1960. Along with her small staff at the central intake office downtown, Mrs. Sheeler coordinates the city's eleven separately sponsored programs, screens all new clients, and makes up the route-sheets for all of the Baltimore meal delivery networks. The Baltimore Metropolitan M.O.W. operation is completely funded by the United Fund of Central Maryland, sponsors of kitchens, and private contributions. "But it's still the volunteers who make Meals on Wheels something that clients can afford," explains Mrs. Elizabeth Lottich, coordinator for all three Lutheran sponsored kitchens.

Other sponsors of M.O.W. kitchens include: the Baltimore Section Council of Jewish Women, the United Methodist Board of Social Concern, the Presbytery of Baltimore, Douglas

Memorial Community Church, St. Anthony's Catholic Church, and First United Church on Copely Road.

A close look at the "Lutheran South" kitchen site and its volunteers provides a good example of the grass roots level of the Meals on Wheels operation in the dock-side area of Baltimore.

Only two years old, the Lutheran South feeding operation delivers a hot lunch and a cold supper to 55 clients Monday through Friday all year 'round. Although it's normal for the volunteers to work 3 hours one day a week, the Lutheran South Kitchen has a good number of its volunteer "packers," "visitors," and "drivers" who work twice a week, including five retired men.

Mr. Moreau, for example, visits on Thursdays and alternates packing with



The day's hot meal of fish, rice and stewed tomatoes is packed by James Spinner, Ann Moreau, and Margaret Adler

(above) as fast as cook Riddick can prepare it. Elizabeth Garland (right) gets a bright welcome from Andrew Palivoda.







driving every other Friday. "I work at a job 5 hours a day 3 days a week then come down here," explains 68-year-old Moreau, as he washes out two thermal packing chests he bought for the Meals on Wheels kitchen with his own money. Although it's Friday and his day to visit—deliver two meals personally to each of eleven people on his route—Mr. Moreau is at the kitchen 1½ hours early helping his wife and two other packers put together chicken-salad sandwiches.

"You'd be surprised how active it keeps you," he adds. "I don't feel any older than when I was fifty."

Usually it takes the day's four packers around 2 hours to prepare the necessary 110 ready-to-eat meals for delivery at 11 a.m. Regularly, recipients pay \$10 in advance each Monday for the week's ten meals. For the needy, including food stamp clients, the cost of the meals is reduced to \$7.50 and is collected during Friday's delivery for the following week. All of the money collected goes to defray the operating cost of the sponsoring kitchen.

The hot and cold meals are designed with elderly nutritional needs in mind, since 90 percent of Baltimore's 1300-plus Meals on Wheels recipients are over 65. The meals are prepared so as to contain ⅔ of an elderly person's nutritional requirements and are unseasoned and easy to chew.

Carrie Riddick, the cook and the only paid member of the Lutheran South kitchen's Meal on Wheels team, explains: "All of our meats are ground into patties, and we try to chop vegetables, such as spinach. Whipped potatoes are a regular, too, along with hard-boiled eggs and puddings. . . ."

You can deliver appetizing and well-balanced meals to old folks, but you can't always get them to eat them, most M.O.W. volunteers have discovered. Teaching volunteers how to pleasantly persuade their clients to "eat the whole thing" is one subject covered in volunteer training sessions.

Each time a new route is added to a central kitchen and new volunteers join up, "basic" training sessions are held by the sponsoring kitchen. Ad-

ditional training sessions on such things as "The Personality of the Aging Person" and "Geriatric Nutrition" can often prove quite helpful, explains Mrs. Lottich, who conducts the training program for the three Lutheran-sponsored kitchens. This week, for example, Mrs. Lottich is holding a training session for an hour each morning with around ten of "Lutheran South's" visitors and drivers.

To many of the older volunteers, the sessions seem more than "just theory." Learning about the needs and feelings of the home-bound elderly on their delivery routes brings them a step closer toward better understanding the changes that aging is bringing to themselves.

The training sessions also give the volunteers a means of exchanging ideas on how to cope with the various problems that can arise. Most of the "do's and don'ts" are outlined in the "Meals on Wheels Volunteer Handbook" distributed by the central intake office, but the volunteers' actual experiences often provide touching illustrations.

"Old people can sometimes feel resentful and cranky—being dependent on other people is embarrassing to them and their slowed bodily functions can make them uncomfortable," points out Mrs. Lottich.

"When they complain to you that 'You're late,' it's really an expression of 'I've missed you . . . I've been waiting for you.' Sometimes you may be the only person they see all day."

Mr. Moreau explains how he always tries to touch the people he visits—putting his arms around the women and patting the men on the back. This type of contact and companionship can help satisfy the recipients' emotional needs and put them in a better mood to eat and digest their food.

Making things easier for the people they serve to eat well and live longer is no lip-service objective to M.O.W. volunteers—it's a serious and multifaceted problem that constantly holds the attention of the program's volunteers and administrators.

"Operating in a city which houses more than 96,000 elderly people, there is a great need for a major outreach effort," observes Peggy Sheeler,

the director of the M.O.W. program.

Beset with a large share of the typical limitations of an understaffed volunteer organization, Mrs. Sheeler nevertheless is determined to continue her fight for the city's aged.

According to a survey conducted by the central intake office, current M.O.W. recipients and volunteer visitors are still the best locators of new clients. However, Mrs. Sheeler adds hopefully, "Project FIND should help us locate many of the isolated elderly people who need us so badly."

Mrs. Sheeler observes that the problems that permit an elderly person to use food stamps to receive home-delivered meals are precisely the same problems that may keep him from finding out about his eligibility and physically preclude his ability to get to the food stamp office to register. Project FIND is expected to become highly useful in helping these needy older citizens.

As part of the project, a message on food assistance programs was enclosed in last August's mailing of 28 million Social Security checks, along with a pre-addressed reply postcard. Those who were interested but could not visit their local welfare office to find out more details on eligibility and participation simply returned the postcard. Arrangements were then made for a Red Cross volunteer to visit the household with further information.

Director Sheeler would also like to see a central city-wide clearing house for services for elderly people, and more college-aged and pre-retirement volunteers involved in these services. Mrs. Sheeler also indicates that a need exists for suggested easy menus for Meals on Wheels clients to use in preparing their breakfasts and weekend meals.

Reaching out to quickly respond to any person needing home-delivered meals can sometimes mean a difference of extra years of life to an incapacitated elderly person. The Baltimore Metropolitan Meals on Wheels program has just begun its fight against malnutrition among the city's aged, combining food stamps with "Meals on Wheels" to help to do the job. ☆





## •The LODGE goes TYPE A

PERCHED HIGH ON cliffs overlooking Conchas Dam Lake is a rustic lodge, a favorite haunt of fishermen and hunters who frequent the untamed land of northeastern New Mexico.

Not only does the lodge host many sportsmen, but it also hosts 31 youngsters who come there every school-day for lunch. They are students from the Conchas Dam School—a one-teacher school without food service facilities and too far away from other schools to share the benefits of their lunch programs.

The first through sixth graders have been coming to the lodge since owner Darrel Adam heard that they needed a place where they could enjoy the benefits of the National School Lunch Program. Adam, an Albuquerque businessman and developer of land around the lake, generously offered the services of his staff as well as the facilities of his restaurant.

The Lodge's chef prepares meals

*The food service staff of Conchas Lodge greet their daily visitors—31 students from nearby Conchas Dam School, who come each weekday for lunch. They look forward to serving the children, who line up at the steam table before many guests arrive.*

meeting the Type A lunch pattern. He uses the menu guide and recipes suggested by his nearest neighbor, Helen Esquibel, school lunch director of the Las Vegas Public Schools.

Since the lodge is located more than a mile from the school, the manager, Viggo Moller, sends two minibuses to transport the students to and from lunch.

Usually one of the drivers is the chef, who loves to regale the students with stories about the food he has prepared for them.

"How much students look forward to lunch," says Reynaldo Estrada, their teacher. "The trip to the lodge and the surprises in the dining room are the big adventures of the day. The students know that the chef and his fellow workers are catering to their whims, and they respond to this very warm and personal relationship."

Most of the time the students eat in their own private dining room where tables are set with white linens,

silverware and decorations of the season. Milk and salads are already at each place setting when they arrive.

"Such an environment creates an attitude of hospitality, encourages good social behavior and makes lunchtime something special—not just at feeding time," observes Mr. Moller. "We try to make the dining environment as interesting for the students as for our lodge guests."

For special events such as the first snow, birthdays or holidays, the children are served in the main dining room of the lodge, where large picture windows offer a breathtaking view of the lake and the mountains.

Gretchen Plagge, New Mexico School Food Service Director, State Department of Education, says that this one-teacher school is a good example of how any school without a lunch program can take advantage of the National School Lunch Program when local citizens become concerned.

She points out that payments from the children, the cash reimbursements for each Type A meal served to students, and USDA-donated commodities, do not cover the full cost of operation.

"The difference is handled by Mr. Adam," Mrs. Plagge reports. "He is a concerned citizen who wants to be sure the students in this developing community get a nutritious school lunch." ☆





## HIGHLIGHTS of the NUTRITION SURVEY

IN 1967, CONGRESSIONAL hearings pointed out strongly the possibility that serious hunger and malnutrition existed in the United States. Later that same year, Congress directed the Department of Health, Education and Welfare to determine the scope and location of malnutrition and related health problems. HEW planned then and executed what has come to be known as the Ten-State Nutrition Survey, the results of which are now available.

Primary interest in each State was malnutrition among the poor. However, the population sampled did not include all of this lower income group within a State, nor was it restricted to only the poor.

Research was conducted in 10 States and New York City, selected as geographically representative of the major areas of the country, the broad diversity of economic, ethnic, and sociocultural composition, and availability of trained manpower to conduct such a survey. The work was accomplished through contracts with State health departments and university schools of medicine.

The survey collected 5 kinds of

information: general demographic; dietary intake; clinical and anthropometric; dental; and biochemical.

All individuals were invited to participate in the clinical evaluation, which included a medical history, physical examination, anthropometric measurements, x-ray examination of the wrist, dental examination, and collection of blood for hemoglobin and hematocrit determinations. This evaluation involved approximately 40,000 individuals.

Selected subgroups received more detailed biochemical and dietary evaluation. Among these subgroups were high-risk populations such as infants and young children, adolescents, pregnant and lactating women, and persons over 60 years old.

There was a heavy representation of children in the groups that received the detailed evaluation. More than 50 percent of the persons examined were 16 years of age or less; 30 percent were from 17 to 44 years of age; and the remainder (17 percent) were 45 years of age or older.

### Major Findings

★ Results indicated that a significant proportion of the population surveyed was malnourished or was at a high risk of developing nutritional problems.

★ Generally, there was increasing evidence of malnutrition as the income level decreased.

★ Among the various age groups surveyed, adolescents between the ages of 10 and 16 years had the highest prevalence of unsatisfactory nutritional status.

★ Male adolescents had more evidence of malnutrition than females.

★ Persons over 60 showed evidence of gradual undernutrition which was not restricted to the very poor or to any single ethnic group.

★ The number of years of school completed by the person usually responsible for buying and preparing the family's food was related to the nutritional status of children under the age of 17. As the homemaker's educational level increased, the evidence of nutritional inadequacies in the children decreased.

★ Among adults there was also a

positive relationship between the number of years of school completed by the individual and his or her nutritional status.

However, since the number of years of school completed is associated with other factors affecting nutrition, such as income status, it is not possible to identify these findings as the specific effect of education.

★ There was evidence that many persons made poor food choices that led to inadequate diets and to poor use of the money available for food.

In particular, many households seldom used foods rich in vitamin A. There was also a heavy emphasis on red meat in many diets, rather than the use of less expensive protein sources such as fish and poultry, or legumes and nuts.

In addition, many diets were deficient in iron content, but this was less a reflection of poor food choice than of the generally low level of iron in the American diet.

★ Poor dental health associated with insufficient dental care was encountered in many segments of the population.

In adolescents it was found that between-meal snacks of foods high in carbohydrates, such as candies, soft drinks, and pastries were associated with the development of dental cavities. This finding suggests the potential detrimental effect of poor nutrition on dental health.

★ School lunch programs were found to be a very important part of nourishment for many children. Particularly in the low-income-ratio States (based on a median measure of poverty), school lunches contributed to a substantial proportion of the total nutrient intake of many school-children.

★ Obesity is a nutritionally related problem of significant public health concern because of its association with increased rates of diabetes, certain cardiovascular diseases, and other chronic diseases.

Obesity was found to be most prevalent in adult women, particularly black women. In some age groups more than 50 percent of adult women were found to be obese.

Men were less frequently obese, although white males in both the



adolescent and the adult age groups had a relatively high prevalence of obesity when compared with black males.

★ Major points in regard to specific nutrients can be summarized:

**Iron:** The evaluation of iron intake data in relation to hemoglobin levels showed a tendency for lower hemoglobin levels to be associated with lower dietary iron intakes. One can conclude from the Ten-State Nutrition survey data that iron deficiency anemia, as evidenced by a high prevalence of low levels of hemoglobin, is a widespread problem within the population surveyed.

The low levels of hemoglobin in the total population appear to be due largely to nutritional iron deficiency.

**Protein:** A relatively large proportion of pregnant and lactating women demonstrated low serum albumin levels, suggesting marginal protein nutrition in this group.

In contrast, dietary protein intakes were generally well above levels considered to be adequate.

**Vitamin A:** Based on evidence from the biochemical measurements and analysis of the dietary intake data, Spanish-Americans in the low-income-ratio States, mainly Mexican-Americans in Texas, have a major problem in regard to vitamin A nutrition.

In addition to the more serious problems noted among the Spanish-American population, young people in all subgroups had a high prevalence of low vitamin A levels.

**Vitamin C:** Although vitamin C was not a major problem among any of the groups studied, males generally had a higher prevalence of low vitamin C levels than did females. The prevalence of poor vitamin C status increased with age.

**Riboflavin and Thiamine:** Nutritional status in relation to thiamine did not appear to be a problem. Riboflavin status was poor among blacks and among young people of all ethnic groups.

**Iodine:** Data from the study showed no evidence of iodine deficiency and no relationship between the prevalence of goiter and iodine status, suggesting that goiter seen did not result from iodine deficiency. ☆

## in any language: School Lunch= FOOD

SINCE THE DAYS of the gold rush in 1849, San Francisco has attracted people from all over the world. In the 1970 census, over 20 percent of the city's 715,000 residents were foreign-born. Their cultures, traditions, and languages are woven into the daily life of this cosmopolitan city.

Nearly half of San Francisco's residents claim a mother tongue other than English and of those, one-tenth are Spanish-speaking. Board a bus or cable car at rush hour and you're likely to see commuters reading newspapers in a variety of native languages.

While this diversity gives life and color to the city, it also presents special communication problems for the agencies of the city government. Four years ago, the San Francisco Unified School District saw a need for multilingual printed material informing families of the National School Lunch Program. It now distributes free and reduced-price lunch applications in four languages: Spanish, English, Chinese and Filipino.

This effort is in accordance with the policy of the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare concerning announcements made by school districts serving national origin minority group children. Guidelines issued in May 1970 state that school districts have the responsibility to adequately notify the parents of these children of all school activities which are called to the attention of other parents. To be adequate, the notice may have to be provided in a language other than English.

In San Francisco, the school district's Office of Human Relations and the Bilingual Education Office worked together to develop multilingual material for the city's 127 elementary, junior and senior high schools.

During the summer of 1970, four separate sheets—one in each of the four foreign languages—were mailed. Many families failed to return the

sheets, thinking the information printed in another language did not apply to them. The cafeteria division tried data processing in hopes that the number of responses would increase and processing would be easier. However, again most papers were not returned and therefore could not be processed. Problems such as changes in names and addresses during the summer and high mailing costs complicated the system.

Last year there was an increase in the number of applications returned. For the first time all languages were written on a single sheet, which was distributed to the students during the first week of school. This year the school district is using a longer single sheet which includes directions for parents to return the form in an enclosed self-addressed envelope to the data processing division.

Mr. Walter Nuss of the school district's accounting division says participation has definitely grown. During the 1966-67 school year, approximately 4 million meals were served in San Francisco schools. Average daily participation was 23,367. Last year daily participation had increased to an average 33,304 students with nearly 5,750,000 meals served.

The cafeteria division complies with Federal standards when determining eligibility for free or reduced-price lunches. During 1971-72, 82 percent of the participants received a free or reduced-price lunch.

In addition to the multilingual printed material, welfare and immigration agencies work in the community to inform families of the National School Lunch Program and other available government services.

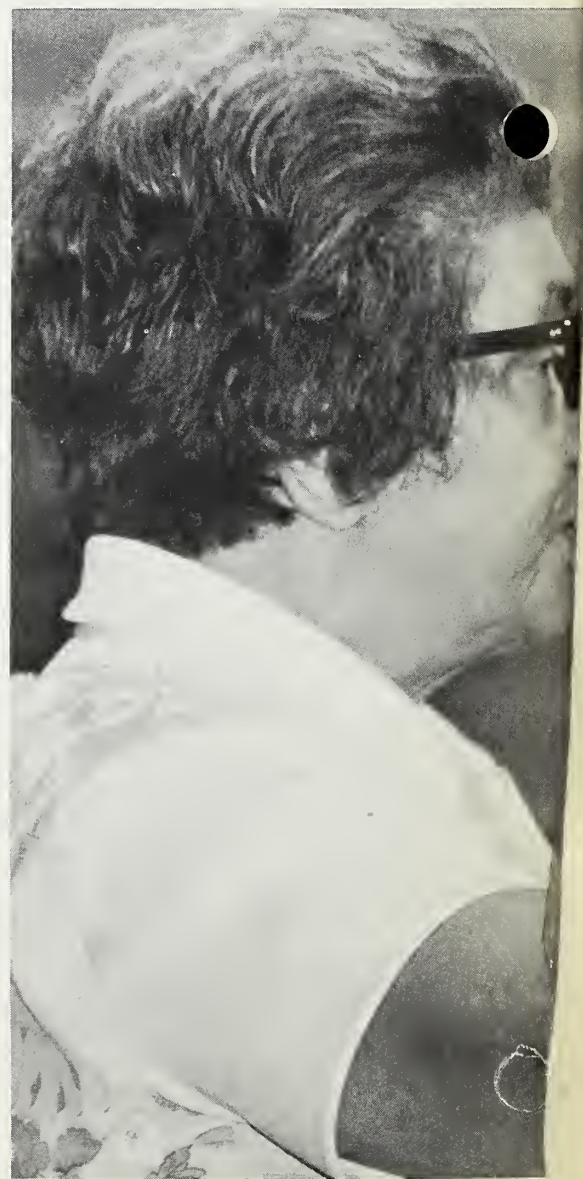
International institutes have been set up to help translate school materials and to tutor children who do not speak English. Dr. Elmer Gallegos, Director of the Spanish Bilingual Education Program, says a new project is being worked on for Spanish-speaking San Francisco students which will provide suggestions for study habits, homework hints, and proper study atmospheres.

Language is no barrier to the lunch program in a district which is reaching to meet the needs of families with interesting and diverse heritages. ☆



# volunteer tells her story

Combining her talents as gourmet cook and teacher, Sophie Leavitt set out several years ago to help needy families prepare nutritious and tasty meals with USDA-donated foods. She began near her winter home in Palm Beach, Florida—experimenting with the foods, distributing recipes, and conducting classes. Since then she has taken her down-to-earth talks and demonstrations to migrant camps in Florida and Pennsylvania, to day care centers, to homes and community halls. In her warm and friendly way, she's worked with whatever is available—oil stoves, hot plates, coffee cans. In the summer of 1970 she conducted a "cooking school" for inner-city youngsters in the public schools of Hanover, Pennsylvania, her home. The children, most of whom are from families on welfare, learned about nutrition while cooking with USDA-donated foods. The following winter she started a special "Food Preparation and Nutrition" program in kindergarten and first grades in the schools of West Palm Beach and the Belle Glade migrant area. To help spread the nutrition education message further, Mrs. Leavitt recorded several radio announcements on the use of donated foods and a series of educational TV demonstrations on low cost meals. Because her ideas and work created so much interest, she incorporated her recipes into "The Pennypinchers' Cookbook" and outlined her adaptable and highly personal teaching methods in a handbook for volunteers called "Operation Food." Mrs. Leavitt was the subject of the first article in a series on outstanding American Volunteers in the February 1970 issue of Reader's Digest. A panel member of the December 1969 White House Conference on Food, Nutrition and Health, Mrs. Leavitt received a letter from President Nixon commending her "outstanding work in assisting poor people to prepare nourishing meals at low cost."





# a volunteer tells her story

By Sophie Leavitt

MY NAME IS Sophie Leavitt. I am a volunteer. Most people think a volunteer is a nut who works for nothing. Nonsense, a volunteer is a person who has deep love for his or her fellow human beings and does something about it.

I spend my summers in Hanover, Pennsylvania, one of the most beautiful spots in the United States. From my window you can see the beautiful rolling farm country of this part of south central Pennsylvania. In the winter I fly with the birds down south to Palm Beach, Florida.

There are two sides to Palm Beach—one is the “right” side of the track, and the other is the “wrong” side of the track. There are hungry people living on the wrong side. Some receive foods donated by the Federal government. Many of these people do not know how to use these foods and, therefore, waste them.

The idea of hungry children and food going to waste appalled me. I started to work with the donated foods and found to my great pleasure that they were good, staple foods of the same high quality that people buy in the supermarkets. What was needed was to help these people learn how to cook these foods so that they tasted good.

In Riveria Beach, where I started working, we had great pleasure both in cooking the foods and eating them. One very old man—upright with a fine face, came almost every session and always sat in the first row. I looked forward to seeing his wonderful face each session. When he did not come, I discovered it was because instead of drinking the milk I had taught him to mix, he was drinking from another kind of a bottle.

There was one time when one woman, who was very frustrated, came to the front of the room—so

full of bitterness because she didn't want donated foods or food stamps, she wanted a job and a decent home and not a handout. She ranted and raved until she got everything out of her system. There was complete silence. She looked up, chagrined, “I didn't mean you.”

Cooking together brings understanding to each other. It was important to have a cup of coffee and talk, especially to let the people talk.

Eventually, I got involved with working with the migrants—rich, rich Palm Beach, separated by a few miles, and all the poverty, heartache of the wonderful people called migrants. Migrants have become a popular subject for many “do-gooder” groups, political groups, and surveys. I have lived through so many surveys I could scream when a government agency is again spending money to make a survey. If only it would spend the survey money on helping these people, instead of going over and over and over, like an old broken record, to try to find out what everyone already knows. You can see that even a lowly volunteer speaks up!

Why do I like the migrants? Because they are an honest, hard-working people who are the least complaining people. They want to work, they try to work, they do work whenever they can. They are a proud people. They don't want handouts, they want work, and they go after it. Do the migrants just migrate and go from State to State because they love to see the country? Probably, being human beings, some do. Sometimes in your innermost soul, in the nights when you can't sleep, don't you too wish you could travel and see the country? Perhaps it may be that some of the migrants rather like this way of earning a living, but most of the migrants prefer staying at one place as long as they can work. You can't pay for food when you don't have work.

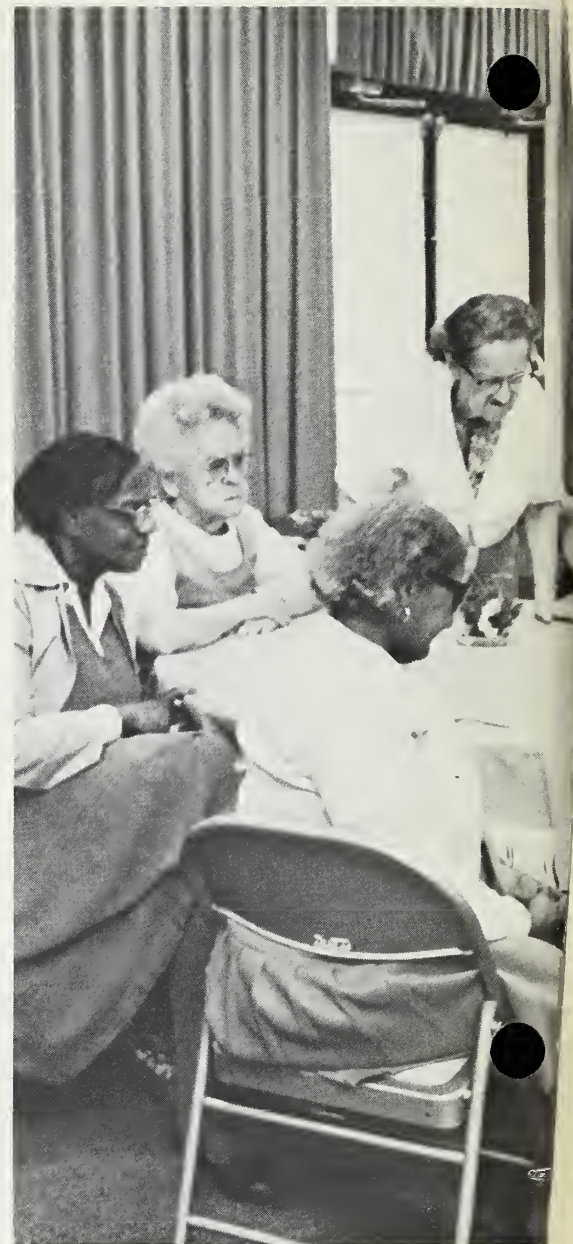
I used to drive the 50 or so miles to Belle Glade to teach the women to cook the foods they received. It was very gratifying. Some of the women would leave their work early to come to learn to cook. This meant they would get less pay; yet they felt they could better feed their families if they learned to cook the foods.

Combining her talents as gourmet cook and teacher, Sophie Leavitt set out several years ago to help needy families prepare nutritious and tasty meals with USDA-donated foods. She began near her winter home in Palm Beach, Florida—experimenting with the foods, distributing recipes, and conducting classes. Since then she has taken her down-to-earth talks and demonstrations to migrant camps in Florida and Pennsylvania, to day care centers, to homes and community halls. In her warm and friendly way, she's worked with whatever is available—oil stoves, hot plates, coffee cans. In the summer of 1970 she conducted a “cooking school” for inner-city youngsters in the public schools of Hanover, Pennsylvania, her home. The children, most of whom are from families on welfare, learned about nutrition while cooking with USDA-donated foods. The following winter she started a special “Food Preparation and Nutrition” program in kindergarten and first grades in the schools of West Palm Beach and the Belle Glade migrant area. To help spread the nutrition education message further, Mrs. Leavitt recorded several radio announcements on the use of donated foods and a series of educational TV demonstrations on low cost meals. Because her ideas and work created so much interest, she incorporated her recipes into “The Pennypinchers' Cookbook” and outlined her adaptable and highly personal teaching methods in a handbook for volunteers called “Operation Food.” Mrs. Leavitt was the subject of the first article in a series on outstanding American Volunteers in the February 1970 issue of Reader's Digest. A panel member of the December 1969 White House Conference on Food, Nutrition and Health, Mrs. Leavitt received a letter from President Nixon commending her “outstanding work in assisting poor people to prepare nourishing meals at low cost.”





"We have one aim," Sophie Leavitt begins, "to make food that is good and makes us healthy . . . nutritious is a fancy word." Watching eagerly are 60 to 70 members of Late Start, a program begun 2 years ago in Pennsylvania to provide nourishing meals, companionship, and activities for the aging. Many of these elderly residents of Harrisburg are very familiar to Mrs. Leavitt, who has spent several mornings teaching them how to plan and prepare good meals for themselves and showing them that cooking can be fun—even for those who live alone. On her fourth visit (below), she prepares several favorites—including fluffy pancakes made with "Quickie Mix" and beaten eggs, and "Stretch It Hamburgers." "I do it this way," Mrs. Leavitt tells the Late Starters, "but what's best for you is the best." It's helpful to make dinners for one or two people and freeze them, she explains (right), showing them a frozen beef casserole she brought from home. At the end of the session (far right), the group enjoys a lunch prepared by the Late Start Program cook using Mrs. Leavitt's recipes for oven-fried chicken, crisp salad, and cookies and biscuits made with "Quickie Mix."



Having been a school teacher, I gravitated to some of the schools in the Belle Glade area. The need for teaching cooking and nutrition was very evident. Cooking food and nutrition go together like the old-fashioned horse and buggy; or, a modern version—an automobile with the motor. You need both to get going. We know that the schools should be teaching how to cook along with the nutrition facts, because just "talking" nutrition get children and people nowhere.

The other day I had a discussion, or, as some of the young people say, a "rap" with the superintendent of schools in our township in Pennsylvania who happens to be a very knowledgeable person. He wanted to know if there was something that would get the low-income women to become involved with their children's education at school. The fact was that

although these women were appointed to committees, they did not show up. What could motivate them?

My first idea was to get the help of the school nurses. He said that even the nurses complained that when they made appointments for either the children or the parents, many of them did not keep the appointments. Were there any other suggestions?

Many women probably do not want to come because they do not have the proper clothes to wear. They are doubly sensitive because they have never spoken in groups or to groups; also, many feel they have not the education to talk. Why be surprised? You can't blame these women for not wanting to come.

Our schools should begin to remedy this by starting with the kindergarten children. Since children like to eat, we can start with food

and nutrition—not the fancy kind of nutrition that mouths words and has no meaning, but actually have the kindergarten children do the kind of cooking they can do.

Smear a piece of bread with peanut butter, and as the children eat, the teacher can tell what this peanut butter does for them nutritionally in language they can understand. At snack time give a carrot to each child and discuss what the carrot does for him in a child's language. It this cooking? Yes.

Out of necessity I have written a booklet giving the nutrition facts, cooking recipes, and information on where to get free materials for a kindergarten and first grade teacher to use in her class. The class can cook on an ordinary hot plate. We have to make up our minds that we are not going to always have a perfect situation where we can have cooking



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My first idea was to get the help of the school nurses. He said that even the nurses complained that when they made appointments for either the children or the parents, many of them did not keep the appointments. Were there any other suggestions?

Many women probably do not want to come because they do not have the proper clothes to wear. They are doubly sensitive because they have never spoken in groups or to groups; also, many feel they have not the education to talk. Why be surprised? You can't blame these women for not wanting to come.

Our schools should begin to remedy this by starting with the kindergarten children. Since children like to eat, we can start with food

and nutrition—not the fancy kind of nutrition that mouths words and has no meaning, but actually have the kindergarten children do the kind of cooking they can do.

Smear a piece of bread with peanut butter, and as the children eat, the teacher can tell what this peanut butter does for them nutritionally in language they can understand. At snack time give a carrot to each child and discuss what the carrot does for him in a child's language. Is this cooking? Yes.

Out of necessity I have written a booklet giving the nutrition facts, cooking recipes, and information on where to get free materials for a kindergarten and first grade teacher to use in her class. The class can cook on an ordinary hot plate. We have to make up our minds that we are not going to always have a perfect situation where we can have cooking

facilities available for each classroom, and, therefore, we should become members of the school of "make do."

At any rate, if we start in the kindergarten teaching food and nutrition and giving the children a chance to talk and to participate in this experience, the children at first may hang their heads and talk very low, or they may not even speak at all. This I know from my own experience. But gradually the child begins to talk, and as he progresses—maybe by the end of the kindergarten year, maybe by the end of first grade, maybe later on—he learns to express himself and to have confidence in himself. This will continue through the school years, so by the time he or she gets married, it is no sweat or tears to get up, talk and participate in groups.

I must add that here and there, some teachers, some schools are beginning to start food and nutrition

programs. Hopefully, they will be relevant and down to earth.

This winter I taught a group of ten migrant children—lovely, lovely children, so eager. People say to me, "You mean you taught the migrant children, and they didn't misbehave?" I could only say, "Never once."

Children in their honesty know when you are honest with them, and when you cook together the everyday good foods that they like to eat, there is never a problem. I must admit I was very anxious to teach the boys, because I strongly believe that boys should learn to cook just as well as girls. I did manage to get four boys and six girls, and the boys were just as interested as the girls.

Here is what I taught the children to cook: American Hamburgers, "Stretch It" Hamburgers, "A Good Breakfast", "A Weekend Breakfast" (including French Toast), Oven Fried

Chicken, Smothered Chicken and Rice in Gravy, Raisin and Peanut Butter Cookies, Oven Biscuits, Top Stove Biscuits for a Hot Day, Top Stove Fruit Dumplings, Pizzas and Snacks, Fresh Fruits and Raw Vegetables.

In cooking there are so many ramifications. We can open the world to these children not only for the good taste of food, which helps make the home a happy home, but also to show them what doors this could open for them. They could become an agricultural extension agent, a nutritionist teaching in the schools, a dietician in a hospital, and on and on and on. But most important we can stress the fact that when they know how to cook well, the children not only take care of their own health, but when they are older, their family's health, which would put them on the road to greater health and happiness.

For so many years we have looked



down on the person who cooks. What's wrong with cooking? As long as we eat food, why not make it both nutritious and good-tasting? We must make an effort to stop down-grading cooking.

Now let's get down to the nitty gritty. With joy in my heart, and these words ringing in my ears, "When will we have more cooking lessons? This summer? When school starts?"—I headed for my home in Hanover.

I decided that I would get volunteers from every church in Hanover who would start a cooking program with their own neighborhood children in their own church kitchens. Hundreds of women, I thought, would rush to do this. Weren't the churches their own? Weren't the children their own?

I asked to speak to the Council of Churches. When I spoke, it seemed that both the men and women were enthusiastic. Now that I think of it, one woman did say she thought the church kitchens could not be used, because she thought the insurance people would not "stand for" them being used by the children. "Nonsense," said another woman, "kitchens are for cooking." So that was that.

It was decided that a letter would be written to go to all the churches (to be posted on the bulletin boards, I later learned) about this program. Some time later I received a copy of the letter. I nearly dropped dead! It said in brief that I would "train the women in procedures, and such training classes would begin with ten women." *Train* the women? All I said was, I would meet with the women once to discuss what the cooking would be, and I would *show* the women how I did it, and they could then do it their way. I had stressed *one* meeting only, because I knew that volunteers could cook.

To continue, "The manual of procedures has been prepared by Mrs. Leavitt and is the one used by her in the teaching of *migrant children* in Florida." Ye gods! Not one woman volunteered.

I am writing this story because I want volunteers to know that we win some battles, we lose some, but we never give up. I know now what

I should have done. My friends and I should have taken the time to talk to every minister, get two women from each church (the ministers know which women will and which won't be volunteers) to become enthused and to start the program.

Have I given up? No, next year we will begin the right way.

Perhaps this story doesn't have a bad ending after all. I started working with the "Late Start" crowd—those honorable men and women who are living on Social Security. "Why don't you get food stamps?" "I don't need food stamps. I only spend \$20.00 a month on food."

Can I flap my wings and crow a little? There are now people getting stamps who weren't. There are people who pull my sleeve and say, "When are you coming again?" There are people who say, "That tastes good, I think I'll try that." There's good talking about shopping to get the most taste and nutrition for our money. There's recipes and recipes and recipes.

There's a woman who says eagerly, "I saw you on television, can I have your 'Quickie Mix' recipe?" And another who asks, "How do you make those pancakes?"

There's talk about the apartments these people love (Federal government funded). Will I come up to see her?—the new refrigerator, the clean, clean bedroom with the picture of a beloved husband—the cup of tea—shared.

I am counting the pennies as I make recipes for the "Over Sixty" crowd.

"Late Start" was started to help feed and make life more meaningful for the elderly. It is a program that is being started in many parts of Pennsylvania, a program that would benefit all our country. I know because I see people beginning to have an interest in "living" again—no staring at blank walls—no starving. It's Late Start, but what a start!

So you can see, as a volunteer my story has a happy ending, and the only message I would like to give all volunteers is *never, never give up*. ☆

# Here come the Nutrients!

HOW DO YOU ACT like a green bean, carrot or banana?

For students at A. S. Johnston Elementary in Irving, Texas, the answer is simple. Act like a "nutrient." The children actually dress up as foods and tell fellow students why they are important to eat.

"This is just one part of our efforts to teach nutrition awareness," says Mrs. Melbagene Ryan, director of food services for Irving Public Schools. "Kids know what foods they like—it's just a matter of getting them to eat nutritious foods and explaining why these foods are good for them. By dressing students as 'nutrients,' we are trying to get them to associate good nutrition with good foods."

Johnston Elementary is one of 30 schools in the Nation selected to participate in a "nutrient standard study" in cooperation with Colorado State University under a contract from the Food and Nutrition Service. The purpose of the study is to compare the presently used Type A lunch pattern with the nutrient standard approach to menu planning.

The Type A lunch system requires schools participating in the National School Lunch Program to follow a menu pattern which specifies amounts of protein-rich food, fruits and vegetables, enriched or whole-grain bread, butter or fortified margarine, and milk.

The use of the nutrient standard approach would allow school lunch menus to be based on the Recommended Dietary Allowances estab-



lished by the Food and Nutrition Board of the National Research Council, rather than the specific Type A pattern.

"The students are very interested in the program," said Wallace Wimbish, principal of Johnston Elementary, "because they know they are doing a service for thousands of other students across the Nation."

In November, 45 student volunteers, who regularly eat in A. S. Johnston's cafeteria, participated in a 4-week test of the Type A lunch approach. In April, these students will take part in a 4-week test of the nutrient standard approach.

Here's how the test works:

Each day two survey team members, subcontracted by the Colorado State University program, weigh each portion of food on five full meal trays to determine the weight of an average serving.

After the student finishes the meal, his tray is returned to the survey team where each uneaten portion of food and milk is carefully weighed and recorded to determine how much and what foods the survey student consumed. In this way, the exact amount

of nutrients eaten by the student at the meal can be determined.

Before the meal, student volunteers fill out a "menu acceptability card" which lists every item on the menu with a rating chart for each. The ratings include, "terrible," "bad," "OK," "good," and "great." After the students have had a chance to complete the cards, the school food service manager rates the meal in terms of quality of preparation.

The rating cards are then sent to Colorado State University where the information is fed into a computer for evaluation. Hopefully, the study will be completed and results available in the fall of 1973.

Mrs. Barbara Sharp, Johnston cafeteria manager, feels that children aren't "picky eaters"—they are just very choosy. "They develop set patterns at home and bring them to school. Most children don't like strange foods—like vegetables that are not served at home."

To acquaint students with a variety of different foods, Mrs. Ryan includes two or three "strange" vegetables on the school's menu each year. "We surround the new food with favorite

foods to get them to try it. But we always make sure that there are more than enough favorite foods included in the meal," she explains.

Three or 4 days before serving a new item, Mrs. Sharp places a can of the food on the cafeteria line to generate interest and help students recognize it.

"It's funny when you hear a kid say he's allergic to certain foods," Mrs. Sharp says. "I have yet to hear a student say he is allergic to desserts."

Mrs. Ryan, Mrs. Sharp and Mr. Wimbish all agree that, while the school is waging an all-out-war on poor eating habits, parents should also concentrate on teaching nutrition awareness at home.

"Too often, the child is not getting the benefits of good nutrition at home," Mrs. Ryan explains. "It's not a matter of care—but one of time. The parents try to cut down on time, so the child doesn't get a good breakfast and many times the same is true in the evening."

In addition, many of the parents take nutrition at school for granted. Mrs. Glynda Dike, first-grade teacher at Johnston Elementary and innovator of the green bean-carrot-banana approach to nutrition awareness, says that in the 14 years she has been teaching, only about four parents have asked how their child eats at school.

Wimbish adds, "Last year we opened the cafeteria to inspection during our annual open house. Out of 1400 total visitors, only 60 visited the lunchroom to see how their child's food is prepared."

One of the goals of the present nutrition education campaign is to get the parents involved by teaching the children.

"We want the children to feed back to their parents what they have learned about nutrition and why it is important," says Wimbish. "Our system is a living curriculum—where instruction given at school can be used every day." ☆



*Dressed as bananas, green beans, and carrots, A.S. Johnston Elementary School students tell their classmates about the foods they portray and explain their importance to nutrition.*



*With "box lunches," Los Lunas students can eat anywhere on campus—under the trees, outside in the courtyard, or in their cars.*

## **box lunches reach "Nutrition Dropouts"**

"NUTRITION DROPOUTS" can be found almost anywhere.

A "nutrition dropout" is a teenager who eats just what he likes, explains Bonnie Hindman, school food service consultant, New Mexico State Department of Education, Santa Fe.

How can you reach these "nutrition dropouts" with a complete meal meeting the Type A lunch requirements?

Mrs. Hindman tackled this problem by looking at it to see what could be done in just one place—the public schools in Los Lunas, a small town on the Rio Grande River about 30 miles south of Albuquerque.

Superintendent of the Los Lunas schools, Bernard Baca, and the director of food services, Gladys Gliesman, were eager to cooperate in a pilot project because they wanted to help the "nutrition dropouts" in their community.

They found it easy to identify students who may become "nutrition dropouts" because such students consistently skip lunch in the school cafeteria.

Instead of asking the students directly, they asked the Student Council to find out why the teenagers weren't

eating lunch in the school cafeteria.

"Too often students tell teachers and other adults what they think these teachers and adults expect to hear rather than what they really think," points out Mrs. Hindman. "But when students hold rap sessions with other students, they are more likely to be authentic with their complaints."

Typical gripes from the students were these:

"I don't like the idea of the school saying: 'Here's the menu for today—eat it.'"

"I don't want to spend all my lunch period standing in line for food."

"I want to get away from school when I eat."

"I don't want to be told to eat this or that because it's good for me."

To meet these complaints, Mrs. Hindman suggested that the school test the box lunch.

With this kind of lunch, students who don't want to be told, "Here's the menu for today—eat it," have a choice. They can go through the cafeteria line or pick up a box lunch. Each features different foods.

A typical box lunch is the following: roast beef sandwich with barbe-





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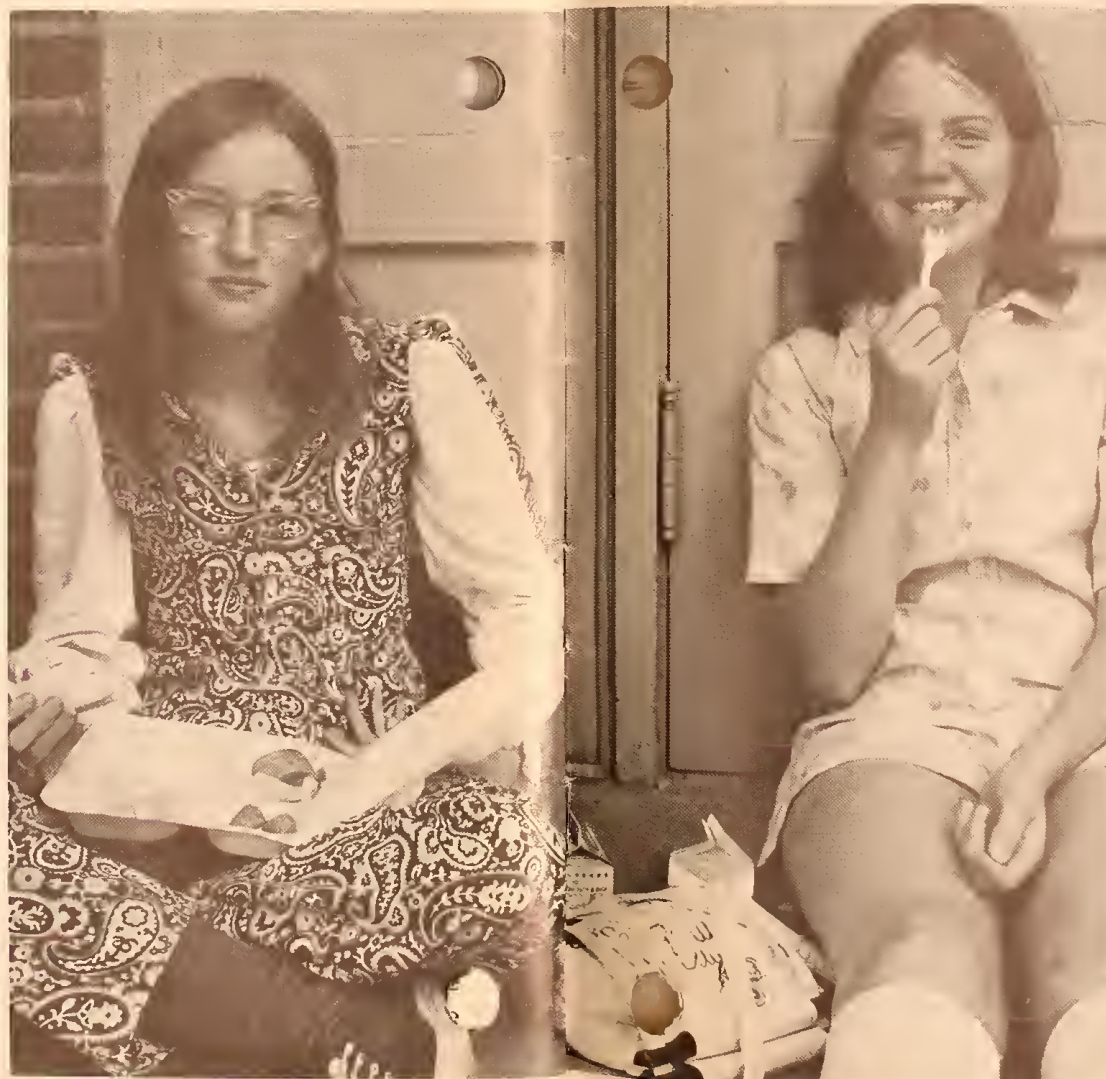
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A typical box lunch is the following: roast beef sandwich with barbe-



que sauce, potato salad cup, cherry tomatoes, celery sticks, and fruit pie, with a 1/2-pint of milk.

Students who don't want to spend all their lunch period standing in line for food, can get "instant service" at the boxed lunch counter. There's no waiting because it's self-service.

Students who want to get away from school when they eat can pick up a box lunch and eat anywhere on campus. Many of them eat in their cars so they can listen to the radio.

Students who don't want to be told to eat something because it's good for them have a choice among their favorite foods. Whether they choose the cafeteria line or the box lunch, they still get a complete USDA Type A lunch when they add whole milk.

Emphasis in all Los Lunas menus is on "the foods you like," rather than on "what's good for you."

"It may be too late to reach many teenagers with nutrition education, so we're trying to guide them to eat nutritious meals by serving the right combinations of foods they readily accept," says Mrs. Hindman.

Students must like the box lunch because Los Lunas High School reports a 50 percent increase in the

number who are participating in the National School Lunch Program since this lunch became available.

School officials from all over the Southwest are visiting Los Lunas to see the box lunch operation.

One official commented, "Our kitchen is too small to prepare a larger volume of food for tray lunches and our dining room cannot accommodate more tables and chairs for seated meals, but we can overcome these obstacles by using the box lunch to reach more students."

Another school official said, "This is an effective way to give a complete meal to those students in schools without a kitchen or dining room." And yet another remarked, "Our year-'round sunshine invites outdoor eating with a box lunch and stretches the limited seating capacity of our cafeteria." ☆

*Editor's Note: This pilot program for increasing participation in Los Lunas High School by offering quick line service of the USDA Type A lunch in a box is one of the project proposals generated by the Southwest Region School Food Service Seminar, Kansas State University, Manhattan, Kansas.*



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